Plotting Best Practices

1. **"Print to PDF"** from your graphics program and then plot that PDF.

    Plotting a PDF instead of directly from the graphics programs reduces errors that can occur and optimizes your file for fast high-quality plotting.

    From your graphics program - **Print a PDF** *(Do not save or export a PDF from your graphics program)* When you print the PDF, set the correct document size that you want plotted with the **resolution set to 300 maximum.**

    This is the first step in **reducing the complexity** of your document. However, even printing to PDF retains **layers**, text and font information, and other **metadata** that is not relevant to printing. To create a **print-friendly PDF** it is best to **flatten** the file as much as possible, removing much of this metadata.

    If your PDF file takes a long time to open, and you can see each layer being drawn on your screen as it opens - it is a good indication that you will have trouble printing it.

2. **Rotate** your file to reduce wasted paper.

    To **set the rotation**, orient your drawing on the screen in the direction you want it to come out of the plotter. This means that the vertical axis of your screen will be in the direction that paper feeds through the plotter, and the horizontal axis of your screen will be the width of the paper.

    Use the auto rotate option in adobe reader or acrobat. Go to **Layout/Output →Rotation → Auto Rotate**

3. **Define color settings** as part of a **Working Space**

    In Photoshop, Edit→ Color Settings. Do this while you do not have any file open, the choices will become a new default. Defining the color settings with a file already open will affect only that file. **We are currently using sRGB** select this as your default so not to conflict with the print driver running the plotter.

4. **Name your files properly.**

    Do not use symbols in the file names you are sending . This could cause the printer to go into error state. Try not to make file names too long. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh is a bad file name. ########################is a horrible file name. Do not do this.

5. **Do not wait until last minute to try and plot.**

   This happens a lot during final reviews, if as little as ten people wait to send their plot last minute it bottle necks the print queues and a plot that takes 10 minutes with no wait time will now be looking at 40 minutes to an hour or more. Do your best to get your plots well before your pin ups. This type of bottle necking cannot be helped when plots are sent last minute.

6. **Do not send your plot to multiple plotters at the same time**.

   In an attempt to see which one prints fastest, students sometimes send their job to multiple plotters at the same time. This type of behavior is what causes extreme bottlenecking when waiting until the last minute to plot. You will be financially responsible for every job you send, whether you cancel it or not. Your jobs will not be reimbursed for this type of behavior.